5 February 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : CIA R&D and Testing of Behavioral Drugs

Donald F. Chamberlain
Inspector General

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Approved for Release
Date

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Drug-related Death of an Investigation

6. The predecessor organization of the Office of Technical Service also was interested in behavioral drugs, although none of the office's records on this activity are in existence, having been destroyed in January 1973. As noted above it participated in the meetings of the so-called ARTICHOKE Committee. That office maintained liaison with personnel at Camp Dietrick, with whom meetings were held once or twice a year to discuss questions involving behavorial drugs. At one such meeting at Deep Creek Lake in Maryland, 18-19 November 1953, with seven representatives from Camp Dietrick and three from CIA, eight of those present were administered LSD which had been introduced into a bottle of Cointreau. Although records of an inquiry by the Inspector General into the incident indicate that those present discussed testing on unwitting persons, and agreed in principle that such a program should be

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explored, none of them were advised until some 20 minutes after they drank the Cointreau that it had been treated with LSD. Of the two who did not take it, one did not drink alcoholic beverages at all and the other refrained because of a heart condition. One of the members of the group, a civilian employee of the Department of Army named Frank R. Olson, had serious after-effects. He was sent at CIA expense, with an escort from CIA, to New York where he received treatment from a psychiatrist, commencing 24 November. While in New York for this treatment he threw himself through a closed window in his room on the tenth floor of the Statler Hotel, falling to his death. CIA, in a document of 9 December 1953, signed by its General Counsel, certified that Dr. Olson's death resulted from "circumstances arising out of an experiment undertaken in the course of his official duties for the United States Government." This was the official position of the Agency, established for the purpose of assuring that the survivors of Dr. Olson received compensation from the BEC. Dr. Olson had experienced some instability and delusions prior to the incident, and it was judged that the drug served to trigger the act leading to his death. Official reprimands were issued by the DCI to three CIA employees held responsible for the incident.